



Pēriṇī Śiva Tāṇḍavam

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Perini is a recent dance form. It was re-invented by Late Dr. Natraj Ramakrishna. It is a virile art form and it is popularly known as Pēriṇī Śiva Tāṇḍavam. Until recent times, no one have any idea about this virile dance form. As per the historical evidences it is believed that Pēriṇī dance form was prevalent in Kākatiya's reign. Visually what we are seeing today, the dance form Perini it is the result of Prof. Natraja Ramakrishna's relentless research work. He was the only person who gave a visual shape to the historical evidences.

He was the one who always tries to dig the past to bring out the disappeared art forms like Pēriṇī, which is a virile dance form and the other dance form named Andhra Nātyam¹ which is a Temple dance form (Ālaya Nṛtyālu). If Natraja Ramakrishna would not have brought/reinvented the Perini dance form, the same dance form would have been remained in the History for only study purpose.

Pēriṇī dance form - Dr. Nataraja Ramakrishna²

"A dancer inspired by God and his divine powers, requesting the god to install his divine powers to the dancers during the dance. This is called PRĒRAṄA NĀTYAM".

Let us go to the root of the word Perini/Prerana. The word Perini/Prerana derives its name from the Telugu word "Prērana", which means inspiration. He believes in Kākatiya's reign that it had been performed as Śiva-Prērana in the temple by a group of young boys and Rudra-Prērana in front of the soldiers before going to the battle field. Pēriṇī Śiva Tāṇḍavam includes three types of 'Vīras' they are Dayāvīra, Dānāvīra and Yuddhavīra and the performers from the following sects like; Maheshas, Mailarudēvas³, Vīras and Pashupatis performed Pēriṇī in Kākatiyas reign. It is a virile form and predominate Vīra and Raudra rasas and the rest of the Rasas are in fewer amount. This dance involves worshiping of the five elements (Pṛithvi, Jala, Tēja, Vāyu, and Ākāśa) and celebrating the mystic "Om".

According to Dr. Nataraja Ramakrishna⁴, 'Jāyapa has preserved the theory of Perini in his treatise and the practical work (how it could be done) embedded in the sculptures of Rāmappa temple. His beliefs, in Rāmappa temple the dancing sculptures are based on the treatise Nṛttaratnāvalī⁵. These sculptures helped him to revive the Perini Śivatāṇḍava'.

The earliest available detailed work on dance/dramaturgy is Bharata's Nāṭya Śāstra (2nd century BC-2nd century A.D). Bharata mentions in his Nāṭya Sastra Nāṭya and Nṛtta. The word 'Nāṭya' means 'Drama' and the word 'Nṛtta' means Dance (pure dance) and it is the synonym for Tāṇḍava but he did not mention the word 'Lāsyā' just he mentioned 'Sukumāra-Nṛttam'⁶.

The following authors mentioned about Pēriṇī in their works like; Nandikēshwara's Bharatārṇava (3rd 4th cen.AD), Pārvadēva's Sangīta-Samaya-Sāra (12th Cen. AD), Sārṅgadēva's Sangītaratnākara (13th cen. AD), Jāyapa's Nṛttaratnāvalī (13th Cen. AD), etc. after Bharata.

Among the scholars, Jāyapa was the first person who introduced the Dēśī art forms⁷ and gave definition for the word 'Dēśī'⁸ in his treatise Nṛttaratnāvalī, in the same way Dr. Natraj Rama Krishna was also the first person to introduce Perini as Dēśī art form.

Śuddha, Dēśī, Prērāṇa, Prēnkhana, Dandiika, Kundali and Kalaśa are the special for Sapta Lāsyas⁹ (seven types of Lasyas). Especially on these 7 types of dances late Dr. Nataraja Ramakrishna had done wonderful research on Perini and he visualized and created movements for Pēriṇī Śiva Tāṇḍava using the text of Nṛttaratnāvalī and the sculptures of Rāmappa temple. He believed that the sculptures of Rāmappa temple resemble powerful and vigorous masculine dance style 'Rudra-Prērāṇa' which used to perform to inspire and invigorate warriors before going to the battle field.

Pēriṇī Śiva Tāṇḍavam and its Repertoire (NRK revival): Costume:

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All the dancers dressed like same in the performance and enter on to the stage one by one with the same costume. The costume looks typical. They wear yellow dhōvati with golden border above the knees. The bells tied firmly to the ankles. The ornamentation somewhat looks artificial¹⁰ but similar to Male performer's ornamentation of south Indian classical art forms like in Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam. Every dancer in the performance put trinētra and aḍḍabō/u on their foreheads. All these dancers look similar and they resemble Lord Siva while performing.

Panchāngas of Pēriṇī:

The whole performance was based on Panchāngas (Perini-Panchangas) consisting of Five parts, Gharghara, Viśama, bhāvāśraya, kaivāraka and gīta. All these Panchangas (five elements) are dedicated and performed like panchabhūtārādhana (the five elements of nature) i.e., pṛithvi (earth), ākāśa (sky), tēja (light), jala (water) and vāyu (air) (incarnations of Siva) to the Siva deity.

Gargharam; the dancer produce the sound by shaking the bells in various types is Garghara. In Nātyarambha, the dancers stands in sampadā then shaking the legs in several types and creates the sound is also known as Garghara.

It has 6 types, patavāṭam, paṭavam, sūripaṭṭem, lakādīmi, siribiram, haribidam¹¹. From these several types of adavulu, aḍugulu, chārī, rechakaa are formed. This order is known as 'Mela Prapthi'.

Vishama; Dancing to the arrangements of various jatis in ākāśa and bhūmicharīs is known as Vishama. For every arrangement it starts with the chārī and concludes the jati with the teermanam (repeating 5 times). Generally, teermanam repeats 3 times as far as Carnatic music or South Indian dance forms are concerned but in this particular tradition it repeats 5 times surprisingly. It is a mixture of nāda-nṛtta. It is also known as layāśritanṭyā.

Bhāvāśrayam; It has Layavinyas to express not only nṛitta but also they use mudrika, karaṇāṅgalāhā to convey bhava (feeling) they take Śivagītas in druvāgāna style whch has attractive postures.

Kavivāram; the dancers performs both nṛtta (pure dance) and nṛtya (communicates lyrical meaning) to the stōtrāgītālū in praise of good qualities of God. The talas that are used here is Rudra, brahma, etc.

Gītam; it contains kaivāraprabandha gītas to perform nṛtta and nṛtya.

Repertoire:

The items that are being performed in the Pēriṇī Śiva Tāṇḍavam are; Mēlaprāpti, Ta h a n a v i n y ā s a m (pushpānjali), Yati Nartanam, Kaivāram (Pancamukhaśabdānartanam), Samīkaranam and Śrṅga Nātyam or Śrṅga Nartanam. This Śrṅga Nartanam dance was performed in the past decades but now-a-days it is disappeared in Pēriṇī performance.

The first item of the repertoire is Mēlaprāpti: Before beginning the item Mēlaprāpti there will be a prayer which praises Lord Siva like in this;

Harahapramadhagaṇādhipadēvā |

Bhavaharaśāṅkarapramāśivā ||

The performance commences with the Mēlaprāpti. Before the Melaprapti, they start producing different sounds with the help of musical instruments like Mridangam and cymbals to create vibrant music which totally changes the atmosphere and take the performance to different world. It is very interest to watch this particular event. Then the dancers will perform jati with some variation. During the performance performers will produce different sounds with the ankle bells by shaking the single legs in different angles on the ground and above the ground, and conclude with a posture. This aspect they call it as gharghara (Producing sound with the ankle bells). The jathi will also be in a

typical way and they recite with the musical instruments. This is a unique type which we rarely find in any other dance forms of India.

The syllables which we find in the jatis which they perform;
 tāmtatajhaṇutām, tāmtatajhaṇutām, tāmtatajhaṇutām
 jhamtarikiṭatakajhētarikiṭatakāṇamtarikiṭatakanātarikiṭataka
 tāmditāmtaiditai tai.....

The jati which they perform will have a descending series of order like 6times, 4times and 2times to the both sides. That's how they conclude the item mēlaprāpti. They generally use hastas like; tripatāka, Kātakhāmukha, alapadma, and sīkharahastas.

The second item; **Tahana Vinyāsam**: It is also called '**'Pushpanjali'**'. The word 'Anjali' means 'an offering'. Offering can be made in various ways. But general meaning of the 'pushpanjali' in dance forms like Bharatanatyam and other dance forms is the dancer or the dancers offering flowers to the deity or welcoming the spectators. But in this dance form, they do not carry any flowers in their hands and there are no such offerings in this item. Performers perform some sort of dance movements consisting of hands and legs according to the mridanga syllables like "tāmtām, tām....."

And at the end of the performance they conclude with a typical movement which has been mentioned in 'SabhaRanjanī' treatise by Sarvagna Kumar Yachandra. Which goes like this: the performers have to touch the right foot big toe to the left leg heel and bring back to the right side and place the big toe on the ground delicately then pull the ankle bells in front of the right foot and it should repeat three times in this way.

The third item; **YatiNartanam**:

In this number the performers perform movement/dance to a jati which is in 'yati' (shape) form like. There are six Yatis according to Natyasastra. They are sama, vishama, gopucha, ḍhamaruka, mridhangam and Pipīlikayatis. Generally, the mridangam syllables will be set in the shape of any one of the yatis. The performers perform yativinyasa taking one of the yatis for the jati. Ex: Takatakatakatakatakatakata.....

In this number typical postures will be displayed by lifting the single leg to forward and shaking the foot and the hand at the same time with same hastas which are stretching to forward and having some lateral movements. Then again lifting up the legs to a side and perform jumps on a single legs. Dancers perform yati variations in the descending order of series followed by some jatis and its variations. The yatis like, sama, vishama, kalasha, pipīlika and mridhangam yatis will be performed in this item.

Then the fourth item; **Panchabhūtādhana**;
 śrīmanamahārājādhirājagāṇapatiḍēvasēvīta
 svayambhūlingājayavijayībhava! vijayībhava! vijayībhava!

In this number, they start the item in praise of Swayambhu Linga who worshiped by Ganapati Dēva, of Kākatiya kingdom. This part of the item they call it as Kaivāramu, in fact, it has to praise of kings. So this item starts with praising of king Gaṇapatiḍēva and their followers in the form of gītās in praise of panchalingas. Then they start dance with Panchamukha shabdharadhana-five elements of the nature depicting lord Śiva for every element they perform gītābhinaya.

The gītābhinaya on PanchaBhūtaLingārādhana like;
 ānandabhairavīrāga; “dēvadēvottamadēvatasārvabhouma
 akhilānDakōṭibrahmānDanāyakā
 tējōlingaśrītiruvāṇṇāmalaiśhwarasvāmin
 bahuparākveṇugānamavadhārāya.....”

Like this for every element they perform abhinaya to the gītās for Pancha Lingas of Śiva Pancha Kshetras. These songs are dedicated to tējōlinga that is dazzled linga which emphasis flute music. After gītābhinaya of each element, they perform nṛtta part, for this part they perform jati to the syllables;

khirrkīṭatakadhidhedhedhinnadhaladhalangudhaladhaladhalāṅgutlāṅgutatto
 kiṇakīṇakīṇāṅgutakkiṇīṅgutaddhēnuküdrinkuküdrinkuküdrinkuku.....

At the end of all elements of Panchabhuta gītābhinaya, they conclude with a lengthy jathi consists movements and postures.

Then the next item, **Śringārāntanam**:

Before beginning of this number, they explain about the item; The Tāndavas are of two types they are, ĀnandaTāndava and the other Raudra Tāndava. The ĀnandaTāndava is also known as 'Śringārāntanam'. In this number the performer portray Lord Śiva in a cool winter evening, Sandhya Tāndava expresses the śringāra rasa to his consort pārvati. So this is 'Śringārāntanam'.

The song;
 Sandhyātānḍavamūrtiśankaraśāśidharanamōnamō....

The performers perform Perīṇī Abhinaya with the help of hand gestures and body movements. In this song we can see performers executing dance postures pertaining to Lord Śiva, but they did not do any steps (footwork) to this song. This is the way the dancer performs Śringārāntanam. But now-a-days it is rarely find place in Perīṇī repertoire.

The final item is, **Samīkaraṇa**:

Finally the dancers perform jati variations in this number while reciting Śiva stōtrāṇas as back ground music and conclude the repertoire.

ōmrudrāyavīrabhadrāya
 Vishvēshwarauvīrabhadraha....

Śiva stotras will be reciting in the back ground music for jatis till the performance gets an end. The music in facts takes the performance to another level. Some of the spectators who are watching the performance, they will go into a frenzy state while watching this item. This is what actually the performers of Perīṇī would reveal that why Perīṇī called 'Prēraṇā'. This will be concluded with formations consisting of Lord Śiva's postures.

As far as technique is concerned Perīṇī has an important feature that is nṛtta. Nṛtta plays an important role in the whole performance with a small amount of abinaya. And it has various jatis composed in yativinyāsa. Nṛtta is predominant in most of the items in the repertoire of Perīṇī. Find abinaya in Mēlaprāpti, Yathi, tahana Vinyāsam and the last item Samīkaraṇa and even Pancamukha śabdānartanam except Gītābhinaya covers Nṛttavinyāsa.

Most of the lyrics used in Perīṇī are Śiva Stotragānālu. They don't have specific script which contains a story or lyrics

The performers of Perīṇiresembles like Lord Śiva, while they perform the dance form from mēlaprāpti to samīkaraṇa and all these items would enlist the Śivatvatva or Śiva -cult.

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8. Ramakrishna, Nataraja. 1984. Perini Siva Tandavam. Perini International, Hyderabad.

Footnotes:

- [1] See pg. 37. AvulaManjulatha, 'Perini Andhra Natyotsavalu - 2007' (held in warangal on 8th to 10th of December 2007) publisher planographers,Pottisreeramu Telugu University, Hyderabad December 2007.
- [2] Andhra Natyam-Pēraṇī-Navajanardhanaparijatam by Dr. NRK Hyderabad June 1987.
- [3] But according to 'Kridabhiramam' Mailarudevas are related to Gondali dance. See - A lover's guide to Warangal, Pg.57.
- [4] See pg.02.AvulaManjulatha, 'Perini Andhra Natyotsavalu - 2007' (held in warangalfrom 8th to 10th of December 2007),Pottisreeramu Telugu University, Hyderabad December 2007.
- [5] But this statement is not substantiated. According to the chapter 5, sloka 5 &6 of Jayapa's Nrittaratnavali treatise has been written in the year 1255 and the Ramappa temple in 1213. How could it possible that Nrittaratnavali treatise based for Ramappa temple dancing sculpture?
- [6] See Dr.P S R Appa Rao's telugu translated 'Bharata's Natya Sastra' chapter 4, pg. 127.
- [7] See Jayapa'sNrittaratnavali, chapter 7.
- [8] See Jayapa'sNrittaratnavali ,chapter5, 3rdsloka.
- [9] See sloka. 730. Of Nandikeshwara's Bharatarbavam.
- [10] These are made up of a golden paper sheet cuts like ornamental shapes.
- [11] According to Sarvagna Kumar Yachandra's Sabha Ranjani book.